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School Committee Minutes 12/14/2004

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2004

Present: Paul Schlichtman, Chair (@8:00 pm) Barbara Goodman
Jeff Thielman, Vice Chair Joani LaMachia
Martin Thrope, Secretary Sue Sheffler

Supt. Kay Donovan
CFO: Rob Addelson
Asst. Supt. Joanne Gurry
Sp. Ed. Director: Marilyn Bisbicos

Committee member Suzanne Owayda absent due to semi-finalist interviews for the superintendent.

Vice Chair Jeff Thielman called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm informing the Committee that Mr. Schlichtman would be delayed.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE & SCHOOL SAFETY WORKING MEETING

Mr. Thielman explained that building maintenance and custodial services were targeted as part of the 2004-2005 budget planning process especially since they account for 10% of the school budget. The questions were developed by the Community Relations Subcommittee (attached).

*CFO Rob Addelson and Director of Building and Custodial Services Mark Miano reviewed the questions and responses on building and custodial services. Mr. Addelson compared Arlington's current custodial staff with the **Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities, U.S. Dept. of Education, February 2003** and stated that APS are adequately staffed to maintain schools at an acceptable level of cleanliness. However Mr. Addelson pointed out that the comparison does not take into account the effect vacation, sick time, personal leave or absence due to injury has on staff. Reassignment and overtime can resolve the issue on a short-term basis but leads to employee burn out.*

Both Mr. Addelson and Mr. Miano agreed that if funding were available, the hiring of a second electrician would be a priority. Currently there is only one electrician town wide to maintain and repair all the school buildings resulting in delays in repairs and deferred maintenance that leads to more costly repairs.

Mr. Addelson identified that over the next three years maintenance issues include training custodial and building maintenance staff to operate and maintain the HVAC, fire and security systems hardware in the newer schools and to address the needs of the older buildings, heating systems, boilers, plumbing, roofs etc..

The Committee acknowledged that according to the federal guidelines there cannot be any more reductions in custodial/maintenance services.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

CONSENT AGENDA:

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. LaMachia the following items on the Consent Agenda were approved 6-0 by the Committee

- *Approval of the regular meeting minutes of November 9, 2004*
- *Approval of the executive session minutes of November 9, 2004*
- *Request from Arlington Rotary Club*
- *NCLB – Homeless Students (referred to policy & procedures)*

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Budget Update

Supt. Donovan reported that she is currently looking at an increase of approximately 1.8 million dollars to \$2 million dollars for next year. The increase would cover: all salary increases, more teachers to cover for the increased enrollments, possibly 4 elementary teachers and 2 each at the OMS and AHS. Supt. Donovan pointed out that the senior graduating class is 251 students while the number of incoming kindergarten is anticipated at 400-410 students. The increase also includes the hiring of a new principal and secretary at the Dallin School in addition to utility expenses at the school. Supt. Donovan and CFO Addelson will have a draft budget for the Committee's review at the January 9th budget workshop.

Report on Joint Meeting

Ms. Sheffler reported that the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen held a joint meeting on December 6th. The goal of the meeting was to acknowledge budget limitations for the next fiscal year and how to address the anticipated structural deficit. The Boards reviewed documents from the Town Manager and the School Committee on anticipated revenues and expenditures. Both Boards agreed to work on understanding each others issues on the structural deficit and to brainstorm on how to address them. The budget revenue task force will focus primarily on the FY06 budget at its next meeting.

Menotomy Preschool Tuition Increase

Supt. Donovan requested approval of a 3% tuition increase to support cost of living increases at the preschool. It was moved by Ms. LaMachia, seconded by Mr. Thielman to approve the increase, however Mr. Thrope was not in favor of the increase without back up materials supporting the request.

Motion to postpone by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Thielman until supporting back up material is presented to the School Committee. Motion approved 6-0 the request is postponed until the January 11th meeting.

AHS Coordinator/Supervisor of Specialized Alternative Services

Supt. Donovan explained that with the increased needs of the different alternative programs at AHS she is seeking to create a position to oversee the scheduling, testing, and placement into the various programs at the high school, both special education classes and alternative education classes. The creation of the position validates what is currently being done and would also support Mr. Skidmore's goal of offering more alternative programs with wrap around service to students at the high school.

The Committee agreed with Mrs. Donovan's request and directed the Superintendent to develop a job description.

APS Staff Meeting – Coordinated Program Review

Dr. Gurry reported that a meeting was held today for all APS staff to inform employees about the upcoming Coordinated Program Review. Supt. Donovan outlined the purpose, scope, and importance of the audit, Special Education Director Marilyn Bisbicos, reported out that the DOE Team will inspect student records, review the referral process, and all programs and documentation; Dr. Gurry reported that the other areas to be examined include Civil Rights of Students, ELL, Title I regulations, Safe & Drug Free Schools, and Food and Nutrition. During the week of December 20th 3 of the 6 teams members will conduct on site visits, additionally the entire 6 member team will be in residence at APS January 10-14. Sixty days after the visit APS will receive the final report which will include commendations and recommendations as well as a timeline for the system come into compliance.

COMMITTEE VOTES

December 21st Special Meeting

Mr. Schlichtman explained that the Committee will need to meet on December 21st to develop questions and strategy for the Superintendent interviews and requested approval to meet at the Whittemore Robbins House at 7:00 pm. Ms. Goodman requested that the meeting not start until 7:30 if possible.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously Voted that the School Committee holds a special meeting on Tuesday, December 21, at 7:30 pm at the Whittemore Robbins House.

Mr. Schlichtman pointed out that the only agenda item would be the superintendent interview process; Richard Warrant of Future Management Systems will also be in attendance to guide the process. The Chair also explained that the full committee would receive the names of the finalists and back up materials after FMS speaks to the candidates and confirms their continued interest in the position.

Warrant Approval

Mr. Addelson requested approval of the warrant.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was

Voted to approve Warrant # 05071 in the amount of \$483,884.40. Approved 5-0-1
(Abstention by Mr. Schlichtman due to a conflict of payment to MASC)

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget

Mr. Thielman reported that at its meeting the subcommittee discussed:

.. Fees – the preliminary numbers and charts were reviewed in music and athletic, participation in both has dipped slightly. Supt. Donovan suggested that the committee keep the fees as is to see what the impact is over a two-year period.

.. Peer Communities analysis was discussed with Vision 2020 members Peter Howard and Charlie Hayes who stated that comparisons to other towns, better or worse, than Arlington on per capita and per pupil school spending would give comparative community work more credibility.

.. Winter Workshop – the subcommittee reviewed the plans for the budget workshop on January 9th. Mr. Thielman will meet with Supt. Donovan, Asst. Supt. Gurry and CFO Rob Addelson to plan the meeting.

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Ms. Goodman reported that at this meeting the subcommittee discussed and reviewed the PEP grant, physical education grades, AHS program of studies and the review of the prerequisite policy.

Policies & Procedures

Mr. Thorpe stated that the subcommittee met and discussed policies KHBA, JJ/JJ-E, GCF-R, BEDH. Policies KHBA Advertising at Sporting Events, JJ/JJ-E Athletic Equity and GFC-R Hiring Procedure were presented for a 1st reading.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 3rd at 4:00 pm and will review how the Life Threatening Allergy policy is working in addition to continued review of section G.

Update on Superintendent Search

Mr. Schlichtman reported that the screening committee is presently interviewing the last of 8 semi-finalists. By the end of the evening the screening committee will vote and submit four finalists to the Future Management Systems. The School Committee will be notified as soon as the candidates are notified and convey that they are still interested in the position.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

.. Correspondence reviewed by Mr. Thorpe

NEW BUSINESS

None

On a motion by Ms. Goodman seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations and a legal issue with no further business to be conducted upon return to open session except to adjourn. Roll Call: 6-0

Executive Session: 10:10 – 10:30

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was unanimously

Voted to adjourn at 10:30 PM.:

Submitted by

Karen Tassone

Committee Secretary